

not the *discipling* upon the *going*. This latter position obtains altogether too largely in the church; and accounts for the many radical, not to say fanatical utterances, concerning the duty of the church in the evangelization of the world as well as for the superficial character of much.

The church must, from her very nature, always be *going*. An irresistible impulse of the Trinity is to be always going out of itself. The word "Go," Dr. Strong says, "is the secret of the universe." This is the one great purpose running thru the ages. This spirit, thru Jesus Christ the Head and thru the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, characterizes the church. She must *go* and the history of the church teaches unmistakably and forcibly that, whenever the church has become content with past conquests and employed all its means and activities for the preservation and strengthening of its own communion the church not only ceased to grow but gradually lost what had been already gained.

Christianity therefore, needed no command to go. The church that will not go without a positive command, would not go with one. From its very nature it can not go. The church that is not going is abnormal. Its inner life is not Christian. The corrective for missionary indifference is at once manifest. Here is to be found the present need in missions. Let this need be supplied, and it can be, and *going* will become the natural expression of the life of the church; and the work set forth in the Great Commission will be accomplished worthy of Him whose name the work of missions bears.

IV. The work of the church. Disciple all nations.

This is the aim and end of going. The universal aspect of Christianity as well as its fitness for all mankind is here expressed by the head of the church. Christianity is not a religion, but the religion. It is not *ethnic* but *eclectic*. Nineteen centuries of history have abundantly illustrated and justified its claim to meet the needs of every age, nation, class and individual. We are further taught that Christianity was to be the mother of civilization and that the true secret of civilization is a obedience to the principles inculcated by Jesus Christ and taught by the church. We are taught also that the members of the church in this present dispensation are to be gathered thru an obedience to this Commission.

But what is meant by the phrase, *disciple all nations*? Two different words are used in verses 19 and 20, altho both are frequently translated by the one word "teach."

The two words can be best defined by setting forth what is the supreme aim in Christian missions. Here a difference of opinion exists. The beliefs expressed in this analysis have been reached by a close and careful study and with access to the very best literature upon the subject of missions in general. We are fully convinced that the supreme aim

and end of missions is to make Jesus Christ known to the world. And this involves more than simply preaching the gospel. This does not contradict the teaching of Matt. 24:14; for the word *witness* as used in the New Testament has a deeper significance than many are wont to attach to it at the present time. The church has a greater work to do for the world than to simply preach the gospel; she can not, under no excuse whatever, free herself from the responsibility of fully winning men to Christ. A mere preaching of the gospel to a man does not end our duty in the conversion of that man. If it did, then there is no apology for an open church and a supported ministry in the Christianized portions of the world. Neither is it enough to say that the end of missions is the salvation of souls. We do not consider, at home, that the work of the church ends with the salvation of a soul. We rather hold that the real work of the church then begins. Why should not this same principle obtain in our purely foreign work? We provide in every way and at whatever expense for the preservation and development of the new life in our home churches. Would Christian charity suffer us to do less in the foreign field where the environments are not so favorable as with us? Discipling certainly means more than a mere heralding of the gospel. It implies the teaching of the principles of the gospel as a system of revealed truth. This instruction both precedes and follows baptism. In these two verses, 19, 20 we have a clear and decisive statement of what the true aim of missions is; viz, the salvation of souls thru the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to the end of establishing self-supporting, self-governing and self propagating churches and thru the evangelization of the whole world.

V. Baptism.

This part of the Commission need not long detain us. There is a general unanimity of opinion as to its significance. There is certainly no ground for treating it so lightly as it is in some quarters today. It is to be the end of the *discipling* and the necessary preparation for the fuller teaching of the principles of Jesus. It was intended to be the visible seal of discipleship. By it all nations were to be brought into covenant and spiritual relations with the triune God. Christ certainly commanded the sign as well as the thing signified. We see no satisfactory reason for emphasizing the latter to the utter exclusion of the former. Water baptism is evidently commanded. That the disciples so understood Him is indicated by their practice. The church too has always insisted that baptism in one form or another is necessary to discipleship. As to the meaning of the word *baptize* there need be no confusion. The root idea of the word is best expressed by such familiar words as *immerse*, *immerge*, *submerge*, *dip*, *bury*, etc. The word will sustain no other meaning whatsoever. No man who values his reputation as a scholar will attach to the word any

other meaning. This is the meaning of the word held by the apostles, hence baptism by immersion was the customary practice. Exegetes generally hold to this meaning of the word and church historians insist that it represents the practice of the early church.

We believe that a three-fold action is taught in the Commission. We are led to this belief from a study of the Commission in its grammatical, philosophical and theological bearings. Space forbids us to give these arguments.

In verse 20 Christ gives us, (1) the theme of the Christian ministry, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This Commission is both inclusive and exclusive. Inclusive in that nothing commanded by Christ may be omitted from our ministry; exclusive, in that it closes the ministry against all purely secular science and philosophy. (I Cor. 1:17; 2:4; Rev. 22:18, 19.) Experience teaches that the church is most powerful when its ministry is simple and scriptural. Every revival of religion has followed a return to the word of God. (2) The authority of the Christian ministry. Our authority is found here, not in creeds or councils or popes. Our authority is the command of Christ. We are to teach what we have been commanded to teach. Our preaching therefore should be with an authority even as was His. (Matt. 7:29). (3) The encouragement given to the Christian ministry. "I am with you." His true presence with the church began at Pentecost. He is the "I am" of the church. He is present to rebuke and chasten, to guide and inspire. The realization of His presence is the only key to the explanation of the church in the apostolic age. Nothing else will serve to keep the church pure and active in our age. It is only as we behold His presence with us observing our faithfulness, knowing our transgression, determining our life and ever offering us the needed grace and strength, will we remain pure, and active, loving and hopeful. And He is with us all the days. Let us thank Him for the promise of the "daily presence;" and a presence too, that will remain with us even in the darkest days. And he shall be with us to the consummation of the age,—not until the physical world shall have been destroyed but until the era and work of redemption is completed. Then He will no longer be with us, but we shall be with Him.

"THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM AS A WITNESS"

THOMAS GIBSON

(A chapter taken from E. P. Woodward's pamphlet entitled, "Christ's Last Prophecy Concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem and His Own Second Advent.")

The disciples asked for a definite "sign" of their Lord's return. He gave them many indications of that event, but only one "sign."

Physical, moral and political indications there were to be, which would enable them